

Campus Carry Task Force
Process and Recommendations

April 4, 2017

Process

The 84th Legislature enacted Senate Bill 11 commonly known as campus carry. The bill resulted in Section 411.2013 to the Texas Government Code authorizing the concealed carrying of handguns by license holders at public two and four year institutions of higher education. Senate Bill 11 goes into effect on August 1, 2017 for all two-year state institutions of higher education.

Recognizing the uniqueness and diversity of higher education, Senate Bill 11 allows colleges and universities to exclude certain areas of the institutions from the concealed carrying of handguns. The bill also requires that the process for exclusion be an open and transparent process that considers all stakeholders. In the spring of 2016 Vernon College President, Dusty Johnston implemented a Campus Carry Task Force (task force) to make recommendations on the Campus Carry policies for Vernon College.

All Vernon College employees were invited to participate in the task force. Twenty-two current employees and one retired employee volunteered to participate in the task force. The task force was charged with the following task.

- Review and discuss the law created by Senate Bill 11 and signed by Governor Abbot that allows licensed individuals to carry concealed weapons on community college campuses effective August 1, 2017.
- Review policies, procedures, practices, guidelines, etc. that are being implemented by Texas universities effective August 1, 2016 to determine best ideas, practices, and policies that have already been formulated.
- Review proposed policies of Texas community colleges that may exist.
- Develop a draft policy that meets the expectations of the law.
- Submit a final draft of recommendations to the administrative council for review.
- Complete prior to December 1, 2016.

The task force's first meeting was held April 15, 2016. During the meeting the task force was given the purpose and charge by Dr. Johnston. Greg Fowler, chair then gave an overview of SB 11 and the laws associated with campus carry and license to carry. In order to obtain stakeholders, input the committee chose to use a survey posted prominently on the front page of the Vernon College webpage during the month of September. In addition, a webpage was developed and implemented in July to keep stakeholders informed.

(<http://www.vernoncollege.edu/conceal>) The taskforce was also provided with access to several university concealed carry policies for review.

The committee's second meeting was held on September 30, 2016. During the meeting the results of the survey were reported by the chair. The results of the survey were generally in favor of no restrictions on the concealed carrying of handguns. The committee discussed each of the other areas. By attorney general opinion, general classrooms, dorms and offices cannot be excluded from concealed carry. Through discussion with biology and chemistry faculty it was ascertained that Vernon College does not have chemicals or biological agents in its labs that would warrant the exclusion of the labs from concealed carry. Sporting events and UIL contest are prohibited by section 46.035(b)(2) of the Texas Penal Code

Survey Results

• No Restrictions	57
• All Restricted	22
• Labs/Chemicals	6
• Sporting Events	6
• Classrooms	6
• Dorms	8
• Offices/Testing	9
• NA/Skipped	12

The committee also discussed several other areas and situations that might be excluded from campus carry including;

- Offices
- Testing center
- Sporting events
- Biology Labs
- Police Academy
- Welding labs
- Events with minors

The third task force meeting was held on 10-21-2016. Based on the last meetings discussions the chair presented the following recommendations for and received approval by the committee.

Committee Recommendations

1. Reason for Policy
 - a. The 84th Legislature enacted Senate Bill 11 commonly known as campus carry, which added Section 411.2013 to the Texas Government Code authorizing the concealed carrying of handguns by license holders at public two and four year institutions of higher education.
2. Application of Policy

- a. The policy applies to all faculty, staff, students, guests, visitors and organizations. Those individuals who lawfully hold a license to carry a handgun (LTC) may carry a handgun unless prohibited by law or this policy.
 - b. This policy does not apply to Commissioned Peace Officers.
3. Prohibited Areas
- a. At a location where a high school or collegiate sporting event or interscholastic event is taking place as prohibited by section 46.035(b)(2) of the Texas Penal Code
 - b. Areas where minors are present (e.g. Kids College, Spring Fest) at the discretion of the college president or their designee.
 - c. Any location where law enforcement or correctional training is conducted, unless expressly authorized by the Director of Protective Services for training purposes. In no circumstance will live ammunition be allowed in these areas.
 - A. Justification: The training policies of the Vernon College Police Academy, Wichita Falls Police Department (WFPD), Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) and Wichita County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) all prohibit weapons and live ammunition during law enforcement and corrections training unless authorized by a training coordinator.
 - d. Any Vernon College testing center location.
 - A. Justification: The Vernon College testing centers require a person being tested to remove all belongings from their pockets and place them in a locker. This action would require that the handgun be removed from the person and placed in a locker in which case the handgun would no longer be concealed in a public place.
 - e. Any areas where high pressure gas vessels are used or stored (e.g. welding labs, Police Academy indoor range, maintenance areas)
 - A. Justification: High pressure gas vessels, if damaged, can cause explosion if penetrated. In addition welding labs inherently use extreme heat during instruction which could cause both weapons and ammunition to malfunction.
 - f. The President or their designee may prohibit the carrying of concealed handguns in order to promote safety at any campus or center premises when appropriate.
4. Campus Housing
- a. Residents
 - A. License to carry (LTC) holders must either carry the weapon concealed on their person or store the weapon in a locking gun safe provided by the resident that has been approved by the Vernon College Police Department. The weapon should only be visible during the time it takes to transfer the weapon from their person to the locked container.
 - b. Non-Residents
 - A. Non-Resident LTC holders must carry the weapon on their persons at all times and may not store the weapon in a campus housing room.

5. Responsibility for Personal Injury or Damage

- a. A person whose possession, use, or storage of a handgun results in personal injury or property damage is personally liable for the injury or damage.

Additional Recommendation

1. It is the recommendation of the task force that Vernon College offer the opportunity for safe campus training to faculty, staff and students.